

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Furthermore, one-sided programs like "Stolen Honor" (the anti-Kerry documentary) do not serve the public interest, and are harmful to our democracy. Sinclair's duty as a media company is to show both sides of the picture. If they're going to air "Stolen Honor" they ought to also air a pro-Kerry program like Going Upriver shortly thereafter. I would say the same thing if there was an anti-Bush movie out. Democracy trumps politics.

Sinclair's decision to air an anti-Kerry documentary two weeks before a huge, important election in US history smacks of electioneering, which is against federal elections law. Regulators like the FCC must step in on behalf of the people and crack down on huge broadcasters like Sinclair that abuse their power.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.